

Chairman Ehli and members of the Committee:

For the record my name is Linda Sandman. I am the owner/Administrator of the two Sonheaven Assisted Living homes here in Helena. I serve as one of the Assisted Living representatives on the Board of the Montana Health Care Association.

Assisted Living facilities all throughout Montana serve elderly residents in their facilities under the Home and Community Based waiver program. This popular Medicaid program that helps elderly in need is very much in demand. The people being served under the waiver in our Assisted living facilities are frail, elderly and need assistance in their daily living activities.

If they had the ability to be here today to express their gratitude this room would be overflowing.

On their behalf I urge your support of this valuable program. We need to be able to offer this alternative to elderly in our communities who are no longer able to stay in their homes and without the Assisted Living option would be going to the significantly more expensive nursing home care. We need the slots for elderly, we need to be able to offer rates that will allow providers like myself to offer this service and give Medicaid consumers some choice in their health care options.

As providers we face a critical situation with our rates that are at the July 2008 level. My last resident that converted to Medicaid went to a rate that was \$1200 a month less than her private pay rate. One hundred percent of my last rate increase in that entire building went to supplement the loss for that one resident who went on Medicaid. These low rates put an undue burden on our private pay residents and make it difficult for many providers such as myself to participate and require that we severely limit our participation in Medicaid. In Helena we are down to essentially one provider that will accept Medicaid recipients as new admissions. This past year I've had to discharge two residents to other facilities because I couldn't accept the low Medicaid rate which is heart breaking. We have way more demand for this

program in our facilities and communities than we can afford to meet.

Thank you again and I urge your support of the Medicaid waiver program serving the elderly.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Linda Sandman". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Linda" and last name "Sandman" clearly distinguishable.

Linda Sandman, MSW, NHA  
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Sonheaven Assisted Living  
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